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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









# AN ADDRESS

TO THE

# AMERICAN PEOPLE,

Written in February, 1864.

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BY MAJOR JAMES W. CARPENTER,  
*Paymaster in the United States Army.*

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NOTE.—The following Address is designed to call the attention of the American people to the imminent danger of allowing political parties to be formed on questions which will array not only party against party, but at the same time also array section against section. While party must necessarily be opposed to party, the danger lies in dividing them by geographical boundaries.

## NATIONAL POLICY.

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*Fellow Citizens :*

Considerations, burdened with the hope of rendering some service to our common country, prompt me to communicate to you the following proposition, viz :

*Is it not of the utmost importance that there should be a radical change in the policy of the Civil Administration of our Government ?*

And the following views seem to argue an affirmative answer to the above question. The vindication and maintenance of the supreme law of the land, necessarily implies the reduction and total destruction of all forces and combinations of forces, whether of a civil or military nature, which have been, or may be, raised in the land in conflict with it ; and it being true that an organization of a civil nature has been formed covering several States and including a large population, and that this organization is defended, protected and kept in being by an organized military force, the overpowering and destruction of this organized military force becomes an inevitable necessity, in order that the supreme law may be maintained, or have a continued existence in that part of the land where the above organized force with which it is in conflict exists, and there being no *practical* way of overcoming this armed force but by an armed force which is of superior power, we are directly brought to the consideration of the relative power of these two armed forces. Whatever tends directly or indirectly to weaken the military power of the one side, necessarily gives the other a corresponding advantage. And what will tend to weaken or strengthen them depends entirely (with the exception of their own operation upon each other) upon the basis upon which they rest; and the elements of which that basis is composed must necessarily be examined in order to understand what is calculated to injure

or destroy that foundation. And upon examination we find that upon one side the military force has its basis in the supreme law of the land, which is embodied in the Constitution of the United States, and supported and sustained by the efforts, the prayers and the will of the loyal people, and is the government itself. On the other side the military force has its basis in the efforts, the prayers and the will of the disloyal people. This last basis we see at a glance is far inferior to the first ; yet it being the basis upon which the military force is dependent for its power and its strength, it follows as a necessary consequence that if this basis is destroyed, or weakened in any way, the military force must fail also, or be proportionately weakened -- Hence it becomes of the utmost importance that every thing which can be, should be done to paralyze the efforts and change the will and prayers, of the disloyal people in the land ; and in order to do this, it is meet that we inquire into the cause which has produced and is producing such powerful efforts, and has fixed within them the will, and prayer, which makes them a disloyal people. We may rest satisfied that there is nothing in the supreme law itself, nor in the Government itself, which has produced this disloyalty--there being two reasons, either of which is sufficient to satisfy the most skeptical on that point. The first is that they (the disloyal) have lived under this same supreme law from their earliest infancy, contentedly, happily, prosperously, and without complaint, until 1860 ; and the other reason, which is equally conclusive is that one of the first of their disloyal actions was to adopt for themselves a government, or supreme law, embodying the same elementary principles in almost all its parts as the one they so suddenly abandoned. Then there being nothing in the government of the United States itself, to cause the disloyalty, no change of that government could remove the disloyalty. But we do find, that a party in the land advocated a policy, which they who are now disloyal considered and believed to be a reproach upon their honor, and tending against their interests, and reserved sovereign rights,(and it being immaterial whether these considerations and this belief, were *true* or *false*, so far as the work of forming the basis of their military forces is concerned) and this party having succeeded in electing a Chief Magistrate, the dislike, and hatred, and possibly fear, of this party and policy, have

alone prompted the efforts, shaped the will and wish in the disloyal bosom to abandon the government they once did and still do love. Then the question comes, will the continuation of that policy be likely to change the will or weaken the efforts of the disloyal people. Certainly not, but a change of that policy and party will, for the same reason, change the will and wish, and paralyze the efforts of the disloyal people, and weaken, and perhaps destroy, entirely the basis upon which their military force rests; and the tendency would be, and we as reasonable men, might expect to see their armed force fast fading from the land, giving at the same time our own arms an easy victory over all such forces as might be maintained by compulsion, or discipline, or all other causes combined, when the prayer of the heart of the people is not with them and the hand lends them unwilling and feeble efforts. These views being correct and the positions well taken, and it seems impossible for the candid mind to deny them, then is not the affirmative of the proposition clearly maintained and put beyond question.

It being inevitably necessary to destroy their military force, and their being but two ways to do it—the first being by the operations of a superior military force directly upon it; and the other (which is impracticable without the first,) is by sapping the foundations upon which it rests. Is it not very important that these two modes operate together, in order that the conflict may be shortened, and that the blood of our countrymen may not be unnecessarily shed? Or shall we continue the present policy, breathing continual life into the hatred and possibly fear and dread which they bear this policy, until both the basis of their military power, and the military power itself, shall have been battered down by the blows of the military arm alone, necessarily involving additional years of conflict, devastation, bloodshed and fraternal slaughter. Having established the great necessity for a change, we arrive at the question of when and how can it be made.

Can the necessary change of policy be made by the present Chief Magistrate, or the party organization which placed him in power? Should the chief reverse his policy at this time, and the party attempt

to follow their chief in the change, would it not be such a conflict, with the original party organization and platform, and also with the publicly proclaimed purposes of the chief, as to render every effort which they may now make to change for the better, and to win the love and confidence of their fellow countrymen, who are now in deadly strife against both them and the Government, (but against the Government only because of them,) a failure. Does not all experience, candid reason and correct judgment clearly teach us that it would take many years of consistent, friendly action on the part of that party and chief to win that confidence and love which would be effective in turning the cannon's muzzle from our national fortress, or even to secure the friendly wishes of the disloyal people? Do not these views clearly teach the American people that it is one of their first duties to organize a party with a different policy, entirely separate and distinct from the one now in power—to elect a new Chief Magistrate, to take the place of the one now in power, at the expiration of his present term—this being the shortest period of time, and the only mode which is left us to make the required change. Shall we not be recreant to and wickedly regardless of the well-being of our Government, (to say nothing of its very existence,) and also untrue to ourselves and our children, and leave heavy and unnecessary burdens on the shoulders of our brave soldiery, if we neglect this great and imperative duty.

The necessity for change, and the time and mode of making it, having been ascertained, then the question comes what should that change be, in order to be effectual in the work of changing the will, wish and prayer, of the disloyal people. Every understanding mind will at once agree that it must be the adoption of a policy which the disloyal people do not consider and believe to be a reproach upon their honor, and as tending against their interests, and reserved sovereign rights ; and in selecting such a policy we are led to the consideration of the different policies which have heretofore been adopted by the political parties of the nation from its organization to the present time. During that time there have been eighteen Presidential Elections, and in all those elections we find that the policies of the

various parties have been such as to disseminate, the members of which the successful parties were composed throughout the whole Union, and never, until 1860, did any policy, or party succeed in electing a Chief Magistrate for the nation, who did not receive more or less support and approval from the people of every State in the Union; but we find it to be true that in the election of 1856, there was a party organized with a candidate for the Presidency, which received no support from any State where the institution of Negro Slavery then existed. At that election it failed, but it continued its party organization and policy, until 1860, when it succeeded in the election, with a policy unfriendly to the institution of Slavery, and it being thus unfriendly, the people of fifteen States, where that institution then existed, were almost unanimously opposed to it; but in the nineteen States where that Institution did not exist were found its advocates and supporters. Thus we see that the distinctive feature which marks this policy is that it divides political parties by geographical boundaries, setting one section of a common country against the other, as well as one party against the other. This arrangement is admirably calculated to produce not only malignant and bitter hatred and burning jealousies in the hearts of the people of each section against the other, but it furnishes the means ready made to the hands of the enemies of the Union with which to organize revolt, rebellion and armed conflict. The truth of these views needs no further proof than the results which have flowed from that arrangement and filled the land with war and woe, since 1860.

Many men, and some of them learned men, have said and are now telling you, that Southern Slavery is the cause and the main spring of the present rebellion.

While other men equally wise are telling you that the Abolitionists, and opposers of the Institution are the cause of all the trouble: thus each side maligns and vilifies the other, while both are equally false.

The true cause of the rebellion is simply the few unscrupulous men who have seized upon the opportunity offered by the above arrangement of political parties, and being ambitious, as well as apt and crafty workmen, they are using the means thus furnished with all the

ingenuity and skill of which they are masters, to destroy the national Union.

In regard to the Institution of Slavery as it has existed in the United States from their organization to the present time, we all know it to be true that it has always had its opposers and its advocates, so has almost every other institution under the sun ; but because men have always differed in opinion in regard to that Institution, and probably always will, are we necessarily driven to the conclusion that armed conflict is the necessary result of that difference, and that it is the duty of brother to slay brother, until all who favor the one opinion or the other are slain ? If this proposition be true in regard to this Institution, then it is true in regard to every other about which men constantly differ, and it would necessarily follow that armed conflict would result and all would be equally in duty bound to continue the deadly strife, until only those of one opinion survived.

Does it need argument to show an intelligent people the fallacious madness of the above proposition ? Believing that it does not, I will offer none.

But the right of the States and the people to exercise control over that Institution, either to establish or to remove it, having never been delegated to the United States by the Constitution, is reserved to the States or the people, and can never be constitutionally taken from them without their consent, and any policy which tends to remove that right from the people, and place it in the hands of the General Government, without their consent tends to subvert the Constitution, and ruin public liberty. Then the whole question of Slavery is solved by the following simple proposition : The people and States can lay it aside whenever they choose, but neither the General Government, nor any State or the people of any State, can lay it aside for any other State ; but each State and the people thereof, can lay it aside or establish it at their pleasure within their own limits ; and in regard to the various questions in relation to the duty of the people themselves in exercising this right, and the designs, wishes and expectations of the founders of our Constitution in relation to the exercise of this right, we find the following facts existing.

First, that at the formation of the Government there were thirteen original States, in all of which the Institution existed, and in 1860, seventy five years later, we find thirty four States, viz 15 slave and 19 free ; and by the Constitution, an amendment can be made when three-fourths of the States shall desire it. Then the question arises can the General Government, or the people through the General Government, ever remove the Institution entirely from the nation, without the consent of every State. We find by the Constitution that the powers already delegated convey the right to three fourths of the States to abolish it in the other one fourth, whenever they shall see fit to ratify an amendment to the Constitution to that effect. Whether that time ever will arrive or not, perhaps we have no better means of judging than by the past, and judging by the past we find that in course of 75 years after the beginning of our nation, 13 slave States have become 15, and the free States, there being none to commence with, have become 19 ; and if they go on increasing in the same ratio for one hundred and fifty years longer, the slave States will then be 19, while the free States will be 47, which will be just three, to one; when the free States will have the full right to lay it aside by a constitutional amendment, constitutionally made ; and until that state of thing arrives, whether it is sooner or later, it is the solemn duty of every loyal citizen, not only to abstain from strife and conflict, on that question and all others, but to do what lies in his power to so shape the policy of political parties as not to furnish means for the disloyal with which to cause strife and conflict. From these considerations then it is plain that the policy should have no such distinctive mark as we find in the policy which succeeded in 1860. There was also a party in 1860, the policy of which was *friendly* to the Institution of Slavery, but this was no less sectional than the other, and would have precisely the same result, so far as furnishing instruments with which to assail the Union is concerned. Then to avoid such results, a policy should be adopted which is wholly impartial and upright on that subject, leaving it to stand or fall by its own merits, as all other institutions of a local or domestic character stand or fall, as they gain the approval or disapproval of those who have the right to sit in judgment upon their merits.

As a further verification of the correctness of these views, let us refer to the counsels and advice of Washington. Among his last words to the people of the United States, dated September 1796, we find the following language, viz : "In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations—Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western—whence designing men may endeavour to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is, to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations. They tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection."

In regard to the question of war and peace, let no man be deceived, although gentlemen may stand up in their places of power and trust and cry : Peace ! Peace ! and the beseeching wail of mothers for peace be heard throughout the land ; and the hearts of American daughters be lifted to heaven, freighted with the prayer for peace ; and the orphan entrenched in its own helplessness, shall invoke humanity for peace; and the fathers of sons slain in battle shall wipe the cold clammy sweat from their aged brows, and with teeth gnashing against relentless war, shall sue the fates for peace. Yet there is no peace until the day that armed resistance to the proper administration of our national government is totally destroyed and no longer exists in the land. Or that unity of government which constitutes you one people, and is the main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, and peace abroad; your safety and prosperity, and the liberty which is almost identical with the fibres of your hearts, is destroyed and no longer exists in the land. Their very existence in the same land necessarily produces conflict, and there can be no peace until one or the other shall cease to exist.

Can there be a shadow of doubt in the mind of any patriotic

American citizen as to which of these should be wiped from the face of the country. It seems impossible that there should, yet it may be well to review the opinions of the Father of his Country on this point. In his Farewell Address we find the following in relation to the value of the unity of Government, viz : " But as it is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth, as this is the point in your political fortress, against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly, and actively,(though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union, to your collective and individual happiness ; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual and immovable attachment to it ; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity, watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety ; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alien any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

Thus we see that whatever difference there may be in the institutions, or aims, or views of the different sections of our country, none of these, nor all of these, can possibly work to us such vital injury as a policy which will alienate the affections of the people of one section against another, and thereby enable the traitor heart to lift the traitor hand against the supreme law of the land with impunity. But the policy having been used and been successful in placing those who have used it in places of trust, and the traitor having seized upon the alienation thus caused as the golden moment when he could succeed in shattering the political fabric which a nation of freemen have so sacredly reared for themselves and their posterity, is it not a true and virtuous patriotism that will fight that traitor to the last extremity, even to desperation, rather than that he shall succeed in his fell designs and accomplish the ruin of a great nation for all coming time ; and while the brave soldiers of the Union have turned their backs for the time being upon all they hold dear, and

are facing the foe, and are freely and fearlessly baring a million of bosoms, as a profound statesman has profoundly said, to whatever of terror there may be in war and death, upon many a field of carnage, and blood stained river, and rolling billow. Will not the American people, with anxious solicitude, embrace the first opportunity to correct the error and remove the policy which has thus fed and is thus feeding the foe, and put in its place one which will have a salutary effect upon a bleeding country, and a tendency to win back that confidence and love which is for the moment seized upon by the traitor and is giving him aid and comfort. If you remove the policy which is the foundation of sectional hatred, will not that hatred be likely soon to fail for the want of a foundation whereon to rest, and when it has failed and faded from the land, and can no more be found, can it then be used by the traitor to nerve the sinews of armed legions in assailing the national Union. And will not love and good will in all sections and the people thereof towards each other be likely to take its place—the tendency of which must certainly be to sustain and strengthen the Union, while it will leave the traitor with his minions weak and uncared for, before our victorious armies to be driven to their merited oblivion.

These considerations and views are practical questions of the present hour ; all are now beginning to look to the new election which is to furnish the nation with a Chief Magistrate for the next Presidential term, and let the American people discharge their duties in regard to them with an alacrity and manliness which becomes intelligent freemen, and we may fondly hope for future liberty and happiness, and the gratitude of those who have gone forth to battle, for the important aid thus rendered ; and in the present and all the boundless future, those who are thus enabled to dwell in peaceful and happy homes, will with fond remembrance point out to their children and children's children the days in which you lived, as the days in which calm deliberation, impartial counsel and unbiased judgment, joined hands with the Union Armies and Navies, to rescue an imperiled country from the thralldom of fanaticism and treason, and by their united strength, averted impending ruin and conducted a great nation to substantial prosperity and peace, while all will rest in proud satisfaction in their national glory.











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